

Atlantic Lyman Ministry 04 Open House at Lyman

by Robert Crawford

The sermon emphasizes the importance of unity, heart devotion to God, and obedience to God's ways, and highlights the role of the intercessor and advocate in our lives.

Duration: 26:41

Scripture: 1 Kings 8:54

Topics: "Obedience To God", "Faithfulness"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the importance of walking in God's ways and obeying His commandments. He emphasizes the need for devotion, obedience, and subjection to God's statutes and judgments. The speaker also highlights the significance of being subject to the Word of God in all aspects of life, including home, family, and business. The sermon concludes with a reminder of the promises of God and the importance of being a witness to the world, so that they may know that the Lord our God is God.

Transcript

I'd like to ask you to look with me in the first book of Kings, chapter 8. Very kind of the brethren here to include me, and of our two speakers, Brother Baird and Brother Milo, to abbreviate their messages. First Kings, chapter 8, and we'll look just briefly from verse 54. And it was so that when Solomon had made an end of praying all this prayer and supplication unto the Lord, he arose from before the altar of the Lord from kneeling on his knees with his hands spread up to heaven.

And he stood and blessed all the congregation of Israel with a loud voice saying, Blessed be the Lord that hath given rest unto his people Israel according to all that he promised. There hath not failed one word of all his good promise which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant. The Lord our God be with us as he was with our fathers.

Let him not leave us nor forsake us, that he may incline our hearts unto him to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments which he commanded our fathers. And let these my words wherewith I have made supplication before the Lord be nigh unto the Lord our God day and night, that he maintain the cause of his servant and the cause of his people Israel at all times as the matter shall require. That all the people of the earth may know that the Lord is God and that there is none

else.

Let your heart therefore be perfect with the Lord our God to walk in his statutes and to keep his commandments as at this day." I take it that all of us are very familiar with this very lengthy chapter that includes preaching and praying and a benediction from Solomon upon the people of Israel. The occasion was the dedication of the temple when the ark had been brought in, and Solomon seemed to recognize his dependence upon the Lord. It's a wonderful thing when you think of reflecting on fifty-five years' history in Lyman, looking back with thanksgiving, and yet I'm quite confident on behalf of all Christians who are here, we look forward with dependence upon the Lord.

What the Lord has been to us in the past, he's able to be to us now, and he can be to us in the future. It would be very striking to read the whole prayer, and you may enjoy doing it in your own reading, but there are one or two things that are very impressive when you come to them in the part we read. Maybe you have noticed that there's something happened in the prayer that we're not told.

The silence of Scripture is very often most suggestive. If you care to look at verse twenty-two, you'll find that Solomon is standing before the Lord. Where we began our reading today at verse fifty-four, he arises from kneeling on his knees before the presence of the Lord, before the altar.

I think that there's something that we do well to recognize, that the more we get into the presence of God, and the more time we're in the presence of God, the more likely we are to get down before him. Humility becomes his presence. Somewhere between verse twenty-two and verse fifty-four, Solomon takes that very low place, and if you need Scripture for standing to pray and kneeling to pray, you have them both right here.

They're in the same chapter. But I'd like to point out just quickly, for a few minutes this afternoon, what it is that he speaks of in blessing the people of God. And you may have noticed there's a very close parallel between verse fifty-eight and verse sixty-one.

In fact, if you can keep three things in mind, they may help to summarize our three messages today. You'll have noticed in verse fifty-eight, he says that he may incline our hearts unto him, to walk in all his ways and to keep his command. Verse sixty-one, let your heart be perfect with the Lord our God, to walk in his statutes and to keep his command.

Now, we'll come back to these three just in a minute or two. What I'd like to point out to you, as the Lord may help me, is a little of what Solomon knew of the Lord's presence in the company of his people. We were speaking already of the importance of unity among the saints of God.

The Lord saved me as a farm lad in western New York thirty-eight years ago, and I was taken soon after that to my first conference. I've been in a great many conferences since, and some of them I don't remember a thing. But I do recall the first one, maybe because I was a young believer and really had a spiritual appetite.

But at any rate, Mr. Muir, who then was in Detroit, read Psalm 133 that our brother Baird read. How good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. That was the first message of the conference.

The second message was Mr. W. J. McClure, Matthew 18 and 20, where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. Those two messages and some others that followed left an impression on my young memory as to the importance of fellowship with the Lord and with his

people. Now Solomon realizes that the blessing and the presence of God is of the greatest importance in our lives.

We were hearing already today from that passage in Philippians of the grave importance of our being of one mind in the Lord and of our recognizing the Lord is at hand, his presence near us. We just were reading the past week in some meetings in Des Moines and we noted that word. Paul says that my first answer, no man stood with me, all forsook me.

I tried to suggest that there might have been a little voice say Paul. I've heard the little voice myself so I think I can say Paul heard it. But the voice may have said, Paul, where are your converts now? Where are those people that you won to Christ? Where are those people that you taught the truth? And my first answer and all it needed was for two witnesses to stand up and Paul could have been released.

But not one appeared. No man stood with me, all forsook me. What did he say? Vengeance on them? No, indeed he didn't.

He was so like his master he said, I pray God it may not be laid to their charge. But he didn't stop there. The whole secret of his life is this, notwithstanding the Lord stood with me and strengthened me.

The importance of the presence of the Lord. We've been reviewing a little today the goodness of God in smaller days in Lyman. I was thinking of an experience when I was a little younger.

I'll not tell you how long ago that is either. But at any rate I landed in the spot and on the Lord's Day morning went along to the meeting. And there were exactly six dear sisters sitting together with a table spread with the bread and the wine and six good women sitting there.

One of them got up when I went in the door and she said, what's your name? And I told her and it didn't mean a thing. Well she said, where are you from? Well I said, I'm from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. And that didn't mean much more.

Well she said, would you have any letter of commendation or introduction with you? And I said, oh yes. So I got out my letter and she looked it over and she showed it to one or two other good sisters. Mind you, you may learn something in Iowa today.

She showed it to two or three good ladies and they read it and they handed me back. And they all shook hands around and they said, you know, there are two brethren left here and if they're on shift work and don't get to meeting, we come and prepare things and we meet. And if a brother comes along, we have a meeting and if one doesn't come, we're unable to have it.

Well, they said the Lord sent me so I'll take it as that. And at any rate, I was about 18. I did everything.

It was really a good meeting. I read my own letter and after I got myself in fellowship, then I gave out hymns and prayed and preached and took the collection and counted it and did everything but put it in my pocket. I gave it to the leading sister to give to one of the brethren.

You know, it's been my privilege to go back to that spot a few times and I look back to that little company. I was saying it was a good meeting, but you can turn from all that. Do you know that that morning, I feel that those six godly women contributed more to that gathering than the one audible voice that was heard.

My voice had to be heard. It was the only thing to keep the meeting going, but those six good women in their quiet godly way, there was a sense of the presence of God. Now that's what Solomon is saying here.

He looks back and he says, Blessed be the Lord, verse 56, that hath given rest unto his people Israel according to all that he promised. His promises fulfilled, verse 57, his presence realized. The Lord our God be with us as he was with our fathers.

Dear saints of God, we were reminded of unity and of our being gathered together. The one thing that we need more of, and I'm speaking in a general sense, as a servant of the Lord for thirty years now, we need to make more room for the presence of the Lord, to feel more of his presence and to know more of the presence of God. I think I speak for all believers here.

There are those hallowed experiences when in our gatherings we have known the real presence of God. Now Solomon says, the wise man says, The Lord be with us as he was with our fathers. Then follow the three things that I suggested from verse 58 and 61, and we'll just group them together.

There's a heart devotion. He says that our hearts may be inclined unto him. Now there's the heart right in devotion.

To walk in all his ways, there's an obedience. And the third one, to keep his statutes, that's subjection. You never have very much difficulty with people who keep things in their proper place.

Now what comes first here? Keeping his commandments. No, it doesn't come first. The heart inclined unto him is first in order.

It's first in experience and it's first in practical godliness. For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. And our Bible says, Keep thy heart above all keeping, for out of it are the issues of life.

I'm not speaking now of some kind of a spurious thing and just talking of a frothy type of affection. Not at all. I'm speaking of real devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let me say, dear saints of God that are here today, we would do well to pray with Solomon that he may incline our hearts unto him. And then he adds a second word with that in verse 61. Let your heart therefore be perfect with the Lord our God.

As we were reminded, we have Schofield, some of us, that say the word implies wholeheartedness for God, single-mindedness or sincerity, not sinless perfection. The whole heart being of one purpose. The word perfect in the New Testament is perhaps a little different, but it will serve my purpose right here.

The heart being perfect for God. It's striking the word that's translated for perfect in the New Testament. The first time it's used, we read God that perfected the world.

Only in our reading it says God that made the world. Acts chapter 17. In all things there is.

God that perfected the world. The next time it's used is in Relations of the Disciples and it says they were perfecting their nets. They were mending their nets.

The third time is in Galatians and it says ye that are spiritual perfect such in one and in the spirit of meekness restore such in one is the word that's used. Now if you put the words together, made, mend, restore, perfect, you have an idea of what the New Testament means as we grow to maturity. Far, far too

many of us are content just to be inside the door and to be able to say I'm going to heaven, marvelous as that is, and yet knowing little of the heart being completely devoted to Christ.

I told a friend last week and it bears repetition, the dear man that I know who has seven children, he serves the Lord and has faithfully for 30 some years now. There came an occasion when his father's estate was settled when he received a very substantial check and he took a look at it. He read the amount of it and he turned it over and he endorsed it to a work for the Lord in the Argentines.

He never laid his finger on one penny of it. And if any of you have seven children, you'll know that he could have used it. And if you have two, you'll know he could have used it.

Or three, you'll know. That dear servant of the Lord turned to me and he said, you know, I'd be afraid to start into that. I might get away from God.

I used it as an illustration and I'm using it today again of a heart that was devoted to Christ. I'm not here to say that I did that for I didn't. Or here to be hypocrite enough to say I would do it.

I think I know my own heart a little bit. But I'd like to look at the text with you. Let your heart there be perfect before the Lord our God.

The heart inclining unto him. Now there's devotion. As the Lord looks on your heart and mine today, does he see real heart devotion to our absent Lord? If we do, then the others follow very easily to walk in all his ways.

Obedient. It doesn't say to walk in some of his ways, but to walk in all his ways. You know, we're inclined to pick out the things that we like and that don't just hit us too much and say I like this.

But walking in all his ways. We read in Luke chapter 1 that Zacharias and Elizabeth were walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. Not sinless.

Blameless. They were walking. The simile of walking is one of those in the Bible that goes from cover to cover.

Enoch walked with God. If you want to go back to the Old Testament record. The New Testament's filled with a Christian walking worthy of the vocation wherewith we're called and so on.

What's it mean? I heard a brother read Isaiah 40 once and tell us what he thought it meant. It says they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings as eagles.

They shall run and not be weary and then they shall walk and not faint. And he said that's normal Christian experience. When you're saved, you rise up to the sword of the height.

Then by and by your feet touch the ground. You run a while. Then you get tired of that and you slow down to a walk.

That's normal Christianity. Not a bit of... It isn't Bible Christianity. All three are simultaneous in the Christian's life.

We're able to mount up with wings as eagles. There's our communion with God. We're able to run the Christian race in fellowship with God and we're able to walk in the monotony on the humdrum of daily

living.

You know there are different things you can suggest about every other gate but walking. Do you ever stop to think of how little change there can be? You can put your right foot forward or your left or your left or your right. You can change them back and forth.

You can speed up a little and slow down a little. But there's very little, very little variety to walking. It's just this humdrum.

It's monotonous. Have you ever had to walk a few miles? You know all about it. Walking is that daily down-to-earth living that God wants out of me and He wants from you.

Walking in all His ways and as our 61st verse says, walking in His statute. Then the third one. Not only that devotion and that obedience but that subjection to all His statutes, His commandments and His judgment which He commanded our Father.

Submitting for all the Word of God. Oh, I wonder how much am I subject to it in my home life, in my family life, in my business life, in my daily life. Solomon says this is the pathway to blessing.

As he prays, he reminds them of the promises of God. He expresses praise, reminds them of the Lord's presence but he reminds them of something else and with this I must close. Let these my words, verse 59, wherewith I have made supplication before the Lord benign unto the Lord our God day and night.

What's he suggesting? Well, if we were to bring it into New Testament language, we have an intercessor. Solomon wanted something to plead his cause and someone to be on his behalf as the passage goes on to say, maintain my cause day and night. Do we have such a one? The one who finished the work on Calvary carries on an unfinished work in the glory as our intercessor, our high priest and when we sin, our advocate with the Father.

Now what should all this lead to? Since he prayed and we have been seeking today to lay hold on God, reflecting on his past blessings, recognizing his presence and his promise, his preservation, there is one grand thing in view in verse 60 that all the people of the earth may know. Our testimony, our unity, coming back to Philippians 1 and 27, our gathering together to proclaim the gospel is that all the people of the world may know. God doesn't put a testimony here or anywhere else for us just to draw in and speak of all our blessings, but it's to go out and to preach the gospel to every creature that all the people of the world may know.

And I'm sure from this area in these years, reflecting back, the light has radiated under our people from lands across the sea that in the day to come will rise up and call God's people blessed as a result of the testimony of the gospel here. May the Lord cause us to leave with a fresh desire as a united people, having been gathered out and gathered unto Him, sent forth to serve Him as we wait our being gathered up to meet Him. May it be ours to know His presence, our devotion right, our obedience correct, our subjection right, and our witness that the world may know that the Lord our God, He is God.

Praise Jesus. Thank you, Jesus. May God bless you.

Thank you. May God bless you. I'm going to say it's been a wonderful day.

I'm sure that you all have enjoyed it as much as I have. You've had a good day today. I certainly have.

It's been one of the shortest days I believe I've spent for a long time. It isn't all done yet. It's been a delightful day.

Praise the Lord. Let us sing the glad praise. Let us sing the glad praise.

We thank Thee for the truth that is contained in Thy precious Word. We ask Thee, O Lord, that there might be a desire within each of our hearts, a fellowship with Thy Son, and a fellowship with one with Thee. We thank You, God, that we are privileged to come together to learn of Thee, to be more like Thee.

We ask Thy blessing upon us every time, thanking Thee once again for Thy goodness, and Thy love, and Thy tenderness before Thy Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord Jesus Christ.

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